THE LIFE OF
MARY CAROLINE HILL MUSSER
By her daughter Balnche Belcher
March 18, 1952

Mary Caroline Hill, the daughter of William Hood Hill and Mary Caroline Sorensen, was born in Mill Creek, Salt Lake Count y, Utah, March 21, 1874. Her parents had come across the plains in their youth and had married, settling in a nice home at the end of a lane, 4198 South 5th East. Her father also built a home at 4197 South 5th East for his second wife, Elizabeth Ann Hamilton. She was the only living girl among 9 boys; their names are as follows:

Alexander Joseph
Emeline Melina (died infant)
William Nickolai
Moroni Nephi
Abraham Mormon
Edgar Eugene
John Hyrum
Mary Caroline
Isaac Franklin
Jacob Fredrick
Guy Henry

AUNT LIZZIES FAMILY
James Robert
Elizabeth Ann
David Reuben
Lewis Samuel
Mary Ellen
Leonora Jane
Agnes Hazel

The earliest recollection we can record of her is told by a dear friend and relative, Louisa Snedaker Hill, who later became the wife of her brother William. Because Mary's mother was also named Mary Caroline, she was called Mamie throughout her life by friends and associates.

In the early days all the entertainment the people had was what they themselves created, enabling them to develop their own talents to the greatest extent. The people of Mill Creek Ward were putting on a play called "Ten Nights in a Bar Room". Their choice of plays was very limited. Mamie was about 6 years old. As she sat watching the play, by her little friend Louisa, she became so wrapped up in the story that when they portrayed the the part of the little child who said "Father dear father come home with me now, the clock in the belfry strikes 12", the father was angry with the child and abused her. Mamie then jumped up and ran out of the hall crying, and went home. This shows how deeply sympathetic she was, and how kind and sweet was her gentle nature.

Sister Martha Park Hulse tells how she first met Mamie in the grade school over on 7th east. It was called the Old Frame School House. Children generally went to school from age 6 to 12. They all mot in the same room and were taught reading, writing, arithmatic, geography, grammar, and had copy books to practice writing from. A pupil paid 65¢ per month to attend grade school. Where there were several in the family, and money was short, the children often took turns attending. One of her teachers was Nathanial Boden.

Martha was a little older than Mamie, but Mamie would like to sit by her to ask questions and get a little help. Mamie was left handed and the teacher was determined to break her of this bad habit, as it was then called. The teacher made her wear a glove on the hand so she had to use the right. This embarrassed Mamie so that after much struggle she learned to write with her right hand; however she always used her left hand for household tasks.

Each year they would have a social at school. The mothers and fathers would come and sit around the sides of the room and watch the children entertain. Then the boys and girls would dance; the older ones teaching the younger ones. Grandpa Hill, Mamies father, would always come and bring his two wives, Aunt Lizzie and Grandmother. They were both dressed equally well. Each had a beautiful black shawl just alike. They were prowd of their children, who all loved a good social time.

Mamie went to grade school until she was 12, then stayed home to learn housekeeping. She had to help make soap and other things. She and her half sister Annie, were together day and night. They slept and ate together just like sisters, first at Grandmothers place and then Aunt Lizzies.

My Grandfathers house was a house of order. When they arose from their beds each morning they knew exactly what was to be done and did it without question. The men were hard workers on the farm so they needed a hearty breakfast. Annie took care of skimming the milk and churning the butter, while Mamie would stay in the kitchen and get breakfast. It usually consisted of a big pot of potatoes boiled in their jackets, fried pork, browned gravy, and a big pitcher of milk. There were 12 around the table each meal.

The girls were splendid housekeepers and good cooks. They sensed their responsibilities and knew if they had nice things they had to help earn them. They picked lucious gooseberries to sell by the peck. Grandma raised geese and they would pluck the feathers from them for pillows and feather beds. It seemed that they had lots of hard work, early and late, but they had continual joy and happiness in doing it. Time did not restrict their activities as it does now. They had no electricity, just candles and karoseen, so they would go to bed early and arise early, enjoying every minute of the day.

When Mamie was 18 years old she went to the Central Seminary, located directly south of the old Mill Creek Cemetary, now Elysian Burial Gardens. The Seminary was built by the Stake. Tuition was $5.00 per year. Theology was the subject taught. Horace Cummings was the teacher for the down-stairs and Mrs Bliss for the up-stairs. Mamie was small, pretty, and popular. Her disposition was so lovable that she was everyones pet. Some of her acquaintences were Crum and Ed Miller, Dave MacMillan, and others.

Mamie and Annie went to all the dances in the ward. All nine brothers would dance with them both, just like sweethearts, then they would dance with friends outside of the ward. Mamie had a tiny waist, rosy cheeks, beautiful cloths and was called the "Bell of the Ball". The ward boundaries were 21st south on the north, the mountains on the east, Cottonwood Creek on the south, and Jordon River on the west.

She met Grant Bagley and they fell in love. He was dark and handsome, but wasn't a member of the Church. He was not too religious but joined the Church for her. Although she loved him deeply she could not put aside her ideals and the things her parents had fought so hard to keep. Her father had gone to prison for his religion. The Gospel was her life and could not be put aside lightly. As much as they loved each other, he did not care to take her to the temple to be married for time and all eternity. Because of her earthly teachings from childhood, she could not accept marrieage otherwise.

He gave her a beautiful bracelet for an engagement present, but she returned it to him when they parted. He left and went back east to school. Mamie tried to forget him, and find new interests and be happy.

One day she went to Salt Lake with Louisa and they met Grant on the street, the first time since his return from the east. Louisa says she will never forget the look of pain and anguish on Mamies face as she saw him coming toward her. Her heart longed to go with him, but her religion would not let her go.

After she gave him up life was no longer the same for her. She had to find something to fill in this vacancy. She took piano lessons from Professor Cook at McCune School of Music. She took sewing lessons at the Kiester College. She had her own beautiful riding horse, sadele, and riding habit. She also worked in the Church in M.I.A.

When she was 23 years old she met Jospeh White Musser, tall, dark, and handsome, who was a high counsilman of the Granite Stake, she being on the Stake Mutual board. He was finally able to replace her old love. His father was Amos Milton Musser who came across the plains in earlier years and was a prominant figure in early Church History. His mother was Mary White.

After Joseph had courted Mamie for a time, she learned he had a wife, Rose. He had married her in June of 1891. Mamies mother and father had embraced the principle of Plural Marriage and had lived it as perfectly as any Latter-day Saint could live it on this earthly sphere. Both of his wives had equal share in everything. The brothers and sisters were all as one family and not designated as half brothers and sisters. Grandfather was a fair and just man. Everyone spoke of his marriage as ideal.

Mamie knew this to be true and wanted also to please God by living the principle. Because the Manifesto had been issued in 1890, Grandmother hesitated in giving her consent to the marriage, but Grandfather , after having told her no, wanted to do the right thing also, so he went to Salt Lake to see the Authorities. He met Apostles John Henry Smith and M. F. Cowley on the street and asked them what the will of the Lord might be. He was assured that this was the right thing to do, so he gave his consent to the marriage. They were married 13 March 1902. After the Manifesto in 1890 the Church had to renounce Plural Marriage, so it was designated to a Priesthood Group to carry on independently from the Church. This marriage had to be kept quiet for a while and the public knew not what had happened to Mamie Hill.

After she was married she was unable to have any children. This was heartbreaking to her and she was advised to have an operation. She was gifted with inspiration from dreams all through her life. She dreamed she came to a stream of water and she must cross it somehow. She was already to jump in the water when something stopped her and told her to go over the bridge in a natural way. She did not have the operation and when nature took its course, Dr Snow delivered her first baby with instruments, two years after her marrieage. The baby was born at the home of Mrs Garret in Salt Lake. When she was able to return home she had to be so careful not to show the baby to anyone. It was named Mary. Uncle Dave came home and said he was going to find her. When he reached the parlor a power stopped him and he was unable to proceed further.

Later on, when Mamie was nursing her new baby which had been anamed Mary, she was sitting by the kitchen stove. A power prompted her to move from where she was sitting. She had no sooner moved than a portion of the cealing fell down right where she had been sitting.

When things quieted down Mamie came to Church with the most beautiful, dark curly haired girl. Another beautiful blond curly haired girl was born two years later called Naomi. When Naomi was a baby she cried very much with the colic. One night Grandfather daid, Mamie! I can't stand that crying another minute so he administered to her and she was never bothered with it again. Mamie's family is as follows:

Mary Hill Musser	Born	13	November	1903
Naomi Hill Musser	Born	21	September	1905
Blanche Hill Musser	Born	6	December	1908
Guy Hill Musser	Born	13	November	1910
Priscilla Hill Musser	Born	3	May	1913
Helen Hill Musser	Born	17	May	1915

Around 1900 there were so many of the Stake and General Officials in the Church taking plural wives that there was dissention in the Church and complaints from the Government. President Joseph F. Smith in 1904 issued a statement that no more of these marriages would be accepted by the Church.

However, in 1906 Joseph married Ellis R. Shipp. I was told by Mr Anderson who was Secretary for Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith, and David O. McKay, that after this marriage Joseph was called before Joseph F. Smith and told that this last would be accepted by the Church, but that no more would be accepted or he would loose his membership. In 1921 on March the 19th action was taken and Joseph was excommunicated from the Church.

Mamie spent many unhappy years because of this. She had been sealed to him so she continued to have his children. Mamie never left her mothers home. When Grandfather died on November 14, 1906, she remained with Grandmother, who helped her take care of all her babies. She helped raise and provide for them. The children were brought up in a beautiful home under much love and tender care, where the very highest principles were taught. Some of our most divine associations were had with Aunt Roses family in Forrest Dale on 7th east. Also Aunt Ellis' family sho lived in Salt Lake. I should never want to miss knowing these choice spirits.

Mother's brothers and sisters were all apposed to her marriage and caused her much unhappiness over it. At one time the pressure was so great that she made a personal call on the President of the Church, Heber J. Grant, and asked him where she stood in the eyes of the Church and the Lord. He told her she must not worry, that her position was faultless. From then on her feelings were quieted on this matter and she devoted all the rest of her days in loving her children and teaching them the Gospel. Her brothers finally accepted her and the children. Many wonderful associations were had together.

Her brothers and their wives and children always came to Grandmothers in January to celebrate her wedding anniversary, or in June to celebrate her birthday. I remember Aunt Ell coming down the side walk with one child after another following. She was thin and frail and was told if she didn't stop

having children she would die. She kept having them and she is still alive today (1952). Mamie would do all the cooking for these occasions. As we children grew older we would help her. She always cooked chicken stew, mashed potatoes and pie. The table would sit 18. The grown-ups would eat first and then the children. When the dishes were finally finished the children and men would play ball or walk around the farm, while the ladies would sit in the parlor and talk. I never knew what they talked about.

All of Uncle Joe's family were great singers and they would entertain us in the parlor in the evening. Aunt Betsy and Uncle Joe would always sing "I wander today from the Hills Betsy to watch the scene below" or "W hen you and I were young Maggie" only he would always sing "Betsy" instead of "Maggie". Uncle Jacob would sing to his wife, "I'll take you home again Kathleen". Her name was Katherine. He would step dance in a lively manner and would say that he was growing older because he could not dance so lively.

At one time Mamie's brother Rhone was very ill and near death for quite a time. This was a critical time in the lives of this family. Each night there came a little white dog to watdh over him and comfort him in the night, and each morning the dog would leave. This did a great deal in bringing him back to his health again. When Rhone was well the dog never returned.

Guy, the youngest boy was idolized by the family. He was possessed of knowledge and wisdom beyond his years. He was especially gifted in music and had a beautiful singing voice. He studied under one of our best vocal teachers. At the age of nine he contracted rheumatic fever which affected his heart. As he grew older there were times when he would have very bad sick spells. His faith did not weaken but the destroyer of health had taken its toll and he passed away at the age of nineteen, much mourned and beloved.

His voice could keep audiences spellbound. When they preached his funeral sermon they said, "Here lies a man like Danile of old, a man without gile." Guy never married. Later on Grandmother dreamed she saw him in rags, unhappy and unable to help himself. He told her of a young lady. Grandmother went to her parents, as the young lady had passed on, and arrangements were made to have them sealed for time and eternity. When this was completed Grandmother had another dream and saw him in beautiful new clothes, and he told her he was satisfied.

Mamie's life was crowned with much joy and much sorrow. She was a true Latter-day Saint. She was tried to the end, but Oh how faithfully she endured. She taught us to be honest, true, never to tell a sordid story. We never heard a swear word in our home, and we also learned undying patience. She gave to everyone who entered her door, so we learned to be generous. She took in her sick brothers and nursed them with no thought of reward. She nursed Uncle Abraham until his death. Aunt Annie came home with the "flue" after the first world war, which meant almost certain death then. Not one of us caught this disease. We moved a bed out into the dining room and every night we all Knelt down around it and asked the Lord to spare our lives and Aunt Annie's; he did. Aunt Hazel came and helped us nurse Annie. I remember all the dishes had to be boiled.

Then Grandmother became old and feeble. Mamie waited on her until her death. We used to comb her hair, bathe her, cut her toenails, and brought breakfast to her in bed for many years. Then Uncle William came home to her mentally sick and she took care of him for a number of years to his death. Her life was completely dedicated to others. She would do without new clothes so the children could have something new. I often thought she should stick up for herself more, but she said no, things like that were not important to her.

In later years, when she should have been relaxing and enjoying a little more ease in life, she had to support us children almost completely. She took in boarders for pay. We had a herd of cows, and when we could not find a hired man, Mary and Naomi did the milking and cleaning after the herd. The job had to be done before and after school ever day. Mother always said she would not worry from one year to the next how she would take care of the farm, because the Lord always sent someone, or opened the way to do the planting or harvesting of the hay. Uncle Rhone was the sweetest, kindest, most sympathetic of the brothers. He would call on her for understanding. He always helped her out of tight financial spots, until his death. She would run a large grocery bill and he would pay it off for her. Uncle Abe was also very kind and generous to all of us. He sent mother many checks to help her raise her children.

Mother was gifted with dreams to guid her along the way. When she didn't know which way to go she was guided in a dream. She taught us all to pray and be humble. We were taught that earthly things were not our goal. We were taught strict tithing, fasting, and paying of offerings; above all to be true to our leaders and never refuse a job in the Church. The secret of success in the Church is obeying those who are in authority, putting your own feelings aside. Then she taught us charity for all. There was no one weak, low, handi, capped in any way, sinful or in any condition, that she could not find something fine in and pass on to others, instead of dragging them down. She heard gossip but made a point never to pass it on. Oh, if we could all be half as good as she. Many people said they loved to hear her pray as it sounded as though she knew the Lord was right there and she was talking to him. She taught Relief Society for years and I have never heard anything but praise for her.

During her lifetime she had learned to drink tea along with Grandmother. She knew it was not the thing to do and tired very hard to overcome this habit. We were not allowed to drink it. For long periods of time she could go without it, then when she would have an attack of gall stones, tea would ease the pain and she would drink it again for a while. A young doctor diagnosed her illness incorrectly and removed her appendix. Later she had the real trouble, gall stones removed. She suffered so many years before this. She would go unconcious with pain, then the stone would pass and she would be well for a while again. Years after her operation she had a reoccuring gall disorder and was told she must have a follow-up operation. The following morning we were to take her to the hospital. We called the Elders in to administer to her that evening. One was Joseph Carlisle. They promised her she would get well. During the night a change came over her and she was able to eliminate green bile. The next morning the Doctor said there was no need for the operation, the condition had been taken care of.

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She was very greatful to the Lord for this blessing. Then in return, she made up her mind she would never touch the much loved tea again. From some where she received strength of will, and was never tempted at the sight of tea again. I remember he saying "I am free". I have overcome this curse to my body, and she never did take it again.

In about 1929 she bumped one of her breasts and later there appeared a lump. In March of 1930 she went to old Dr Rothwell in Murray and he told her there was no hope of cure. In July she went to see about an operation and arrangements were made to operate. She even bought a fancy night gown to wear in bed at the hospital. During the night she had a dream. A man in white came to her and told her not to have the operation, so she cancelled it.

Very few people knew of her plight. They always saw her smiling and she never complained. She felt her sorrow was hers and not for others to bear. She worked in Relief Society for a time. I remember she would arise early in the morning at daylight and read the bood of Mormon and Bible. It seemed she could not gain enough knowledge fast enough. She would try to tell us of her new findings in the books, but we were as yet asleep to them. How blind youth is.

Her financial worries were very heavy at this time. Mary and Naomi were married and had families. I went to work in an office and helped pay the expenses in the home. Her health became worse and worse and finally she was confined to her bed. She could get up and down but could not work. Pricilla and Helen took care of the house and meals and Guy the outside work. When they went to school she would not hear of us having someone come in to stay with her. She would take care of herself until we came home at night. Mary and Naomi would run in during the day to see if she were comfortable. She never impressed us with the seriousness of her trouble. We all were humble and prayerful, and had no thought but that God would heal her against all odds. This was what she wanted and what we wanted also. Mary, the oldest daughter, received a dream that all would be well and she would get well. We did not entertain the idea of death.

I remember one day I was helping her bathe. She was putting on her old fashioned long sleeved and long legged garments, which she always wore, even after a change was permitted by the first Presidency. We were by the warm coal stove in her bedroom. She said to me "You are not required to live in Polygamy now, but what ever you do never raise your hand against it as long as you live. Will you promise me? I said I would promise and to this day I honor the principle and teach my children the same.

The Sunday she passed away I realized something was changing. I knew that the Lord could heal her so I got in the car and drove down to brother Carlisle's home, and asked if he would come again and administer to her. He came but there was no change. She went into a light coma now and then. She knew her property had not been legally taken care of and for some reason that was a paramount thought right then. We then asked a lawyer to come to our home and draw up the necessary papers for her to sign. I sat on the bed and held her hand while she signed, deeding the remainder of the original property Grandfather had settled on to us 6 children. When she was finished she leaned back and relaxed. From then on she sank into a stuper and could not eat. She

She never regained conciousness and on the following Sunday evening she stopped breathing. November 9, 1930.

At first we could not see why this had to be, but in later years we thanked God for his mercy in taking her at that time. She had had her share of toil and sorrow for her earth life, and though we would have loved to have her companionship throughout our lives; some of the things that followed would have been more than she could bear. God was really good to her.

Mary thought her dream, that Mother would get well, had not come true. Then something told her that Mother was well and happy. We knew this was true and that all promises made are not always for this life. She left a great ideal for us to live up to. She lived an example for us to go by through the years. I only hope this light can shine into the lives of all her grandchildren and posterity to come, to help keep alive the Gospel principles through the dark days and trials that are ahead of us, and give us strength until the Master comes, which time is not far away.

This is a copy of the original, mimeographed by Norman E. Wright grandchild of Mary Caroline Hill Musser at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri April 19, 1952.